CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Adopt resolution approving the pilot program for a remote meter reading project and appropriate funding in the amount of $28,000.00 (EUD)

MEETING DATE: September 19, 2001

SUBMITTED BY: Electric Utility Director

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving implementation of a pilot program for a remote meter reading project and appropriate $28,000.00 for the project.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Electric Utility Department and the Finance Department have in the past been able to offer a remote dial meter to customers where the electric meter was not accessible as a result of locked gates, animals, etc. However, these devices have not been manufactured for a number of years and are no longer available from the suppliers. The Departments have researched the market for an alternative to the remote dial meter and found remote readable meters via short-range radio. With this system a solid state meter with a radio transmitter would be installed at the customer's premise. The handheld meter reading devices used by the meter readers would be retrofitted with radio receivers and as the meter readers walk by the premises where the meters are located, the meters are read. This type of system is successfully in service at SMUD and Truckee Donner Utility.

The remote reading system if implemented at "hard to read locations" (approximately 1800) would bring a number of benefits to both the customers and the City. The meter reading would be transparent to the customers thus eliminating any inconvenience from having to unlock gates, secure pets, set dial cards, etc. on meter reading dates. The City could eliminate the monthly advisory mailings to the 200-250 customers where gates must be unlocked, pets secured, etc. Meter reading errors would be reduced due to the electronic data transfer and the elimination of the need to obtain readings from across fences, through knotholes in fences, from great distances, etc. An additional benefit from the system is its ability to identify tampering with the meter.

The system can also be installed at commercial and industrial customers. At these customers the system would bring the additional benefit of the City not having to handle and maintain security of 500± keys used to gain access to meters in buildings and utility rooms. A further benefit to both the customer and the City would be the elimination of the need for meter readers to be escorted to the meters, a requirement by the customer at several locations.

It is recommended that the pilot program be implemented in the residential area at approximately 100 locations for further evaluation. It is expected that the system will be recommended for implementation over a two year period at the 1800± "hard to read locations" at a projected cost of $170,000. The cost of the pilot program recommended here includes necessary test equipment, retrofit of the handheld reading devices (6), and the required FCC license for the radio frequencies used. These items are necessary for the pilot program and are capable of supporting a full-scale system (1800±) should it be implemented; i.e. full implementation will only require the purchase and installation of radio readable meters.

APPROVED: _____

H. Dixon Flynn - City Manager

CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

FUNDING: $28,000.00 - Electric System Revenue Certificates of Participation

Funding Approval: _____
Vicky McAthie
Finance Director

_____
Vicky McAthie
Finance Director

_____
Alan N. Vallow
Electric Utility Director

Prepared by: Hans Hansen, Manager, Engineering and Operations

ANV/HH/lst

c: City Attorney
Finance Director
Electric Meter Technician

APPROVED: _____
for R. Dixon Flynn - City Manager

RESOLUTION NO. 2001-224

A RESOLUTION OF THE LODI CITY COUNCIL APPROVING THE PILOT PROGRAM FOR A REMOTE METER READING PROJECT AND APPROPRIATE FUNDING

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WHEREAS, the Electric Utility Department and the Finance Department have in the past been able to offer a remote dial meter to customers where the electric meter was not accessible as a result of locked gates, animals, etc.; and

WHEREAS, these devices have not been manufactured for a number of years and are no longer available from the suppliers; and

WHEREAS, the Electric Utility Department has researched the market for an alternative to the remote dial meter and found remote readable meters via short-range radio. With this system a solid state meter with a radio transmitter would be installed at the customer's premise. The handheld meter reading devices used by the meter readers would be retrofitted with radio receivers and as the meter readers walk by the premises where the meters are located, the meters are read. This type of system is successfully in service at SMUD and Truckee Donner Utility; and

WHEREAS, the remote reading system if implemented at "hard to read locations" (approximately 1800) would bring a number of benefits to both the customers and the City. The meter reading would be transparent to the customers thus eliminating any inconvenience from having to unlock gates, secure pets, set dial cards, etc. on meter reading dates. The City could eliminate the monthly advisory mailings to the 200-250 customers where gates must be unlocked, pets secured, etc. Meter reading errors would be reduced due to the electronic data transfer and the elimination of the need to obtain readings from across fences, through knotholes in fences, from great distances, etc. An additional benefit from the system is its ability to identify tampering with the meter; and

WHEREAS, the system can also be installed at commercial and industrial customers. At these customers the system would bring the additional benefit of the City not having to handle and maintain security of 500± keys used to gain access to meters in buildings and utility rooms. A further benefit to both the customer and the City would be the elimination of the need for meter readers to be escorted to the meters, a requirement by the customer at several locations; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that the pilot program be implemented in the residential area at approximately 100 locations for further evaluation. It is expected that the system would be recommended for implementation over a two-year period at the 1800± "hard to read locations" at a projected cost of $170,000. The cost of the pilot program recommended here includes necessary test equipment, retrofit of the handheld reading devices (6), and the required FCC license for the radio frequencies used. These items are necessary for the pilot program and are capable of supporting a full-scale system (1800±) should it be implemented; i.e. full implementation would only require the purchase and installation of radio readable meters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lodi City Council does hereby approve the implementation of a pilot program for a remote meter reading project, and further appropriates funds in the amount of $28,000.00 for the project.

Dated: September 19, 2001

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I hereby certify that Resolution No. 2001-224 was passed and adopted by the Lodi City Council in a special meeting held September 19, 2001 by the following vote:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – Hitchcock, Howard, Land, Pennino and Mayor Nakanishi

NOES: COUNCIL MEMBERS – None

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS – None

ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS – None

SUSAN J. BLACKSTON
City Clerk